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CHAPTER IV

THE ROYAL ADVENTURERS AND THE PLANTATIONS

The early trade of the English to the coast of Africa was very largely in exchange for products which could be sold in England. Among these may be mentioned elephants' teeth, wax, malaguetta and gold. As has been shown, the hope of discovering gold mines was the principal cause of the first expedition sent to Africa by the Royal Adventurers in December, 1660. When this scheme to mine gold was abandoned the company's agents traded for gold which was brought down from the interior or washed out by the slow and laborious toil of the natives. The other African products, especially elephants' teeth, were brought to London where they sold quite readily for very good prices.

Although this direct trade between England and Africa was never neglected, the slave trade with the English colonies in the West Indies was destined to absorb the company's attention because the supply of indentured servants¹ was never great enough to meet the needs of the rapidly growing sugar and indigo plantations. From the planters point of view, moreover, slaves had numerous advantages over white servants as plantation laborers. Slaves and their children after them were chattel property for life. The danger of rebellion was very small because often the slaves could not even converse with one another, since they were likely to be from different parts of Africa and therefore to speak a different dialect. Finally, neither the original outlay for slaves nor the cost of feeding and clothing them was great, and therefore slaves were regarded as more economical than indentured servants. Moreover, there was much to be said against encouraging the lower classes of England to come to the plantations, where they often en-

¹ These were people of the rougher and even criminal classes of the parent country who, in return for their ocean passage, agreed to work for some planter during a specified number of years, usually seven.

gaged in disturbances of one kind and another. Also, after a service of a few years, it was necessary to allow them to go where they pleased. Nevertheless, with all their disadvantages, it may be truly said that the planters preferred the white servants to any others. It was, however, impossible to obtain the needed supply of labor from this source and therefore it was always necessary to import slaves from Africa.

Previous to the accession of Charles II not many slaves were imported into the English possessions in the West Indies. Of this small number all but a few had been brought by the ships of the Dutch West India Company. The Dutch centered their West India trade at the island of Curaçao, whence they could supply not only their own colonies with slaves but those of the French, English and even the Spanish when opportunity offered. So great was the demand for slaves and other necessities procured from the Dutch that the English planters in the West Indies regarded this trade as highly desirable. For instance, when the island of Barbadoes surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, January 11, 1652, it stipulated that it should retain its freedom of trade and that no company should be formed which would monopolize its commodities.² Nevertheless, by the Navigation Act of 1660 colonial exports, part of which had to be carried only to England, were confined to English ships. This was a sufficient limitation of their former freedom of trade to incense the planters in the West Indies but, as a matter of greater importance to them, the king granted to the Company of Royal Adventurers the exclusive trade to the western coast of Africa, thus limiting their supply of Negro slaves to this organization. The company therefore undertook this task, realizing that in the Negro trade it would find by far its most lucrative returns. Not only did the company supply the planters with slaves, their greatest necessity, but in exchange for these it took sugar and other

² C. S. P., Col., 1674-1675, Addenda, p. 86, articles agreed on by Lord Willoughby and Sir George Ayscue and others, January 11, 1652.

plantation products which it carried to England. It was natural that the company should endeavor to make a success of its business, but, on the other hand, it was to be expected that the planters would regard the company as a monopoly and a nuisance to be outwitted if possible.

In 1660 Barbadoes was in much the same condition as is true of every rapidly expanding new country. The settlers occupied as much land as they could obtain and directed every effort toward its cultivation and improvement. The growing of sugar had proved to be very profitable and every planter saw his gains limited only by the lack of labor to cultivate his lands. Every possible effort was therefore made to obtain laborers and machinery. Although the planters had little ready capital, they made purchases with a free hand, depending upon the returns from their next year's crop to pay off their debts. As a result, the planters were continually in debt to the merchants. The merchants greatly desired that Barbadoes should be made as dependent on England as possible in order that the constantly increasing amount of money which the planters owed them might be better secured. Moreover, they wished to prevent the planters from manipulating the laws of the island in such a way as to hinder the effective collection of debts.³ The planters, on the other hand, appreciated very keenly the ill effects upon themselves of the laws which were passed in England for the regulation of commerce. They bitterly complained of the enumerated article clause of the Navigation Act of 1660, which provided that all sugars, indigo and cotton-wool should be carried only to England. Already the planters were very greatly in debt to the merchants and they saw in this new law the beginning of the restrictions by which the merchants intended to throttle their trade. Indeed it seemed to the planters as if they were completely at the mercy of the merchants, who paid what they pleased for sugar, and charged excessive

³ C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 14, petitions of merchants and planters, March 1, 1661.

prices for Negroes, cattle and supplies.⁴ Among those who were regarded as oppressors were the factors of the Royal Company, which controlled the Negro supply upon which the prosperity of the plantations depended.

Sir Thomas Modyford, speaker of the assembly, also became the agent for the Royal Adventurers in Barbadoes. Modyford was very enthusiastic about the company's prospects for a profitable trade in Negroes with the Spanish colonies. The people of Barbadoes neither shared Modyford's enthusiasm for this trade nor for the company's monopoly because they believed that thereby the price of slaves was considerably increased. On December 18, 1662, the council and assembly of Barbadoes resolved to ask the king for a free trade to Africa or to be assured that the factors of the Royal Company would sell their slaves for the same price as other merchants.⁵ Very shortly, the duke of York, the company's governor, informed Governor Willoughby that the company had made arrangements to provide Barbadoes and the Caribbee Islands with 3,000 slaves per annum and that the needs of the islands would be attended to as conditions changed. Moreover, the company pledged itself to see that all Negroes imported into the island should be sold by lots, as had been the custom, at the average rate of seventeen pounds per head or for commodities of the island rated at that price.⁶ The duke of York also requested Governor Willoughby to ascertain if possible how many Negroes were desired by the planters at that rate, and to see that any planters who wished to become members of the company should be given an opportunity to do so.⁷

⁴ C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, pp. 29, 30, 45, 46, 47, petitions from Barbadoes, May 11, July 10, 12, 1661.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117, minutes of the council and assembly of Barbadoes, December 18, 1662.

⁶ The pieces of eight were to be accepted at four shillings each, and 2,400 pounds of muscovado sugar were to be accepted in exchange for a slave.

⁷ Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England . . . to the Petition . . . exhibited . . . by Sir Paul Painter, His Royal Highness (the duke of York) and others to Lord Willoughby, January 10, 1662/3.

When the company's factors, Sir Thomas Modyford and Sir Peter Colleton, began to sell Negroes to the planters they encountered endless trouble and litigation in the collection of debts. In a vivid description of their difficulties to the company they declared that Governor Willoughby did nothing to assist them until he received several admonitions from the king. To be sure the governor's power in judicial matters was limited by the council, which in large part was made up of landholders who naturally attempted to shield the planters from their creditors. In case an execution on a debt was obtained from a local court the property remained in the hands of the debtor for eighty days. During this time the debtor often made away with the property, if it was in the form of chattel goods. If the judgment was against real estate the land also remained in the hands of the debtor for eighty days, during which time a committee, usually neighbors of the debtor, appraised the land, often above its real value. If this sum exceeded the debt, the creditor was compelled to pay the difference. As the factors declared, therefore, it was a miracle if the creditors got their money.⁸

In 1664, Sir Thomas Modyford was called from Barbadoes to become governor of Jamaica.⁹ In his place the Royal Adventurers selected John Reid, who had resided for several years in Spain and was therefore conversant with the needs of the Spanish colonies concerning slaves. Reid also obtained the office of sub-commissioner of prizes in Barbadoes.¹⁰

After Modyford's departure from Barbadoes the factors still experienced great difficulty in collecting the company's debts. Since Willoughby had not exerted himself in its behalf the company informed the king that it had supplied the planters liberally with slaves, but that the planters

⁸ C. O. 1: 18, ff. 85, 86, Modyford and Colleton to the Royal Adventurers, March 20, 1664.

⁹ A. C. R., 75: 13, 14, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75: 20.

owed the company £40,000,¹¹ and that by reason of the intolerable delays in the courts it was impossible to collect this sum. Thereupon the earl of Clarendon wrote to Governor Willoughby admonishing him to take such measures as would make a renewal of the company's complaints unnecessary. In this letter Clarendon also declared that while the king had shown great care for the planters by restraining the company from charging excessive prices for slaves, he should also protect the interests of the merchants. Willoughby, therefore, was recommended to see speedy justice given to the company, and to use his influence in obtaining a better law for the collection of debts.¹²

To add to the company's difficulties private traders began to infringe upon the territory included in the company's charter. As an instance of this Captain Pepperell, in charge of one of the company's ships, seized an interloper called the "William" and "Jane" off the coast of New Callabar in Guinea. When Pepperell appeared at Barbadoes with his prize, one of the owners of the captured ship brought suit in a common law court against the company's commander for damages to the extent of 500,000 pounds of sugar. The company's factors at once went bail for Pepperell. Ordinarily the case would have been tried by a jury of planters from whom the company's agents could expect no consideration. The factors, therefore, petitioned to have the case removed from the common law courts to the admiralty court where the governor was the presiding officer. A jury of sympathetic islanders would thus be dispensed with and, if necessary, the case could be appealed to a higher court in England with greater ease. When Willoughby called the admiralty court on June 17, 1665, the factors cited the company's royal charter which justified the seizure of interlopers. Notwithstanding the clear case which the company's agents seemed to have the case

¹¹ On January 2, 1665, the company estimated the entire debt which was owing to it in all the plantations at £49,895. S. P., Dom., Charles II, 110, f. 18, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king.

¹² P. C. R., Charles II, 4: 177, 190-192, August 3, 24, 1664.

was adjourned for a week. Fearing that the governor might take action adverse to the company's interests the factors succeeded in sending the ship in question to Jamaica where it was not under the jurisdiction of Lord Willoughby.¹³ The bail bonds against Pepperell were not withdrawn, and therefore he stood in as great danger of prosecution as ever. When the company learned of this situation it immediately petitioned Secretary Arlington that Willoughby be commanded not to permit any further procedures against Pepperell and to transmit the whole case to the Privy Council. It also requested that those who had transgressed the company's charter should be punished.¹⁴ The Privy Council issued an order in accordance with the company's desires.¹⁵ Willoughby accused the factors of having reported the case falsely and of having affronted him grossly by taking the vessel in question away from the island by stealth. Moreover, he declared that he would have made them understand his point of view "if they had not been employed by soe Royall a Compagnie."¹⁶

Since Willoughby persistently neglected to send Pepperell's bail bonds to England, the Royal Company finally reported the matter again to the king.¹⁷ Once more the case was heard in the Privy Council where it was referred to the committee on trade and plantations.¹⁸ On January 31, 1668, the Privy Council issued an order to Governor Willoughby, brother of the former incumbent, commanding him to stop all proceedings against the Royal Company and commanding him to send everything in regard to the case to England without delay.¹⁹ Lord Willoughby

¹³ C. O. 1: 19, ff. 234-238, proceedings of the court of admiralty in Barbadoes, June 17, 24, 1665.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 232, petition of the Royal Adventurers to Arlington, September 14, 1665.

¹⁵ P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 402, Privy Council to Willoughby, April 6, 1666.

¹⁶ C. O. 1: 20, f. 209, Willoughby to Privy Council, July 16, 1666.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 335, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king, December 7, 1666.

¹⁸ P. C. R., Charles II, 6: 231, December 7, 1666.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7: 162, 163, Privy Council to Willoughby, January 31, 1668.

replied that so far as he could ascertain all the records had been sent to England and that if any others were found he would also despatch them.²⁰ Thus ended this contest in regard to the maintenance of the company's privileges. The king had not allowed his royal prerogative to be interfered with and the company's charter was regarded as intact. Theoretically the victory was all in favor of the company, but on account of the losses which it was incurring in the Anglo-Dutch war, it was impossible for the company to furnish a sufficient supply of Negroes to Barbadoes, that is, if Lord Willoughby's heated protests can be trusted.

Speaking of the general prohibitions on their trade, the governor exclaimed, May 12, 1666, that he had "come to where itt pinches, and if yor Maty gives not an ample & speedy redress, you have not onely lost St. Christophers but you will lose the rest, I (aye) & famous Barbadoes, too, I feare." In bitter terms he spoke of the poverty of the island, protesting that anyone who had recommended the various restraints on the colony's trade was "more a merchant than a good subject." The restriction on the trade to Guinea, he declared, was one of the things that had brought Barbadoes to its present condition; and the favoritism displayed toward the Royal Company in carrying on the Negro trade with the Spaniards had entirely deprived the colonial government of an export duty on slaves.²¹

The decision of the company to issue licenses to private traders did not allay the storm of criticism that continued to descend on the company from Barbadoes. The new governor, as his brother had done, urged a free trade to Guinea for Negroes, maintaining that slaves had become so scarce and expensive that the poor planters would be forced to go to foreign plantations for a livelihood.²² He complained that the Colletons, father and son, the latter of whom was one of the company's factors, had helped to bring about

²⁰ C. O. 1: 22, f. 191, Willoughby to Privy Council, May 30, 1668.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20, f. 149, Willoughby to the king, May 12, 1666.

²² *Ibid.*, 21, f. 170, Willoughby to the king, ?July, 1667.

this critical condition.²³ On September 5, 1667, representatives of the whole colony petitioned the king to throw open the Guinea trade or to force the company to supply them with slaves at the prices promised in the early declaration, although even those prices seemed like a canker of usury to the much abused planters.²⁴

Following these complaints Sir Paul Painter and others submitted a petition to the House of Commons in which they asserted that an open trade to Africa was much better than one carried on by a company. They maintained that previous to the establishment of the Royal Adventurers Negroes had been sold for twelve, fourteen and sixteen pounds per head, or 1,600 to 1,800 pounds of sugar, whereas now the company was selling the best slaves to the Spaniards at eighteen pounds per head, while the planters paid as high as thirty pounds for those of inferior grade. This, they declared, had so exasperated the planters that they often refused to ship their sugar and other products to England in the company's ships no matter what freight rates the factors offered.

In reply to the petition of Sir Paul Painter, Ellis Leighton, the company's secretary, admitted that as a natural result of the Anglo-Dutch war the price of slaves like all other products in Barbadoes, had increased considerably. He denied that this increase could be attributed to the sale of Negroes to the Spaniards since the company had not disposed of more than 1,200 slaves to them. He contended that the company had been thrown into a critical financial condition, partly as the result of the losses incurred from DeRuyter in Africa, but mostly by the constantly increasing debts which the planters owed to the company. Notwithstanding these difficulties Secretary Leighton maintained that since the formation of the company Barbadoes

²³ C. O. 1: 21, f. 222, Willoughby to Williamson, September 17, 1667.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 209, petition of the representatives of Barbadoes to the king, September 5, 1667. This document and Willoughby's letter of September 17, 1667, also urge very strongly that the bars of the Navigation Acts be let down in order to permit servants to be imported from Scotland.

had been supplied more adequately with slaves than at any previous time. As for the planters' having refused to ship their goods on the company's ships, he declared that this was nothing more than they had consistently done since the formation of the company.²⁵

In answer to the planters' representation of September 5, 1667, Sir Ellis Leighton admitted that if Barbadoes alone was being considered, a free trade to Guinea was preferable to any other, but since the trade of the whole nation had to be given first consideration the idea was pernicious. He asserted that the company was willing to furnish the planters with all the Negroes they desired at the rates already published, seventeen pounds per head, provided security was given for payment in money or sugar; that instead of a lack of Negroes in Barbadoes there had been so large a number left on the hands of the factors that many had died; and that if the planters were sincere in their complaints they would be willing to agree with the company on a definite number of slaves which they would take annually.²⁶

Since the importance of the Royal Company was by this time definitely on the wane Sir Paul Painter succeeded in presenting his petition regarding affairs in Barbadoes to the House of Commons, in September, 1667. Although the Royal Company was ordered to produce its charter no further action was taken. The planters were by no means discouraged and again requested the Privy Council to con-

²⁵ The petition and these answers are printed in a pamphlet entitled, "Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading into Africa, to the Petition and Paper of certain Heads and Particulars thereunto relating exhibited to the Honourable House of Commons by Sir Paul Painter." As to the assertion that the planters refused to ship their products in the company's ships there seems to be no very good evidence on either side. Sometimes the company's vessels were sent home from Barbadoes empty. Upon such occasions the agents always said that there were no goods with which to load them.

²⁶ C. O. 1: 22, f. 42, answer of Sir Ellis Leighton, secretary of the Royal Adventurers, to the petition from Barbadoes of September 5, 1667; C. O. 1: 22, f. 43, proposal of the Royal Adventurers concerning the sale of Negroes in Barbadoes, 9 January, 1668

sider the matter of granting a free trade to Guinea.²⁷ Later the people of Barbadoes once more represented to the king the inconceivable poverty caused by the lack of free trade to Guinea and other places.²⁸ Some of the Barbadoes assemblymen even suggested that all the merchants be excluded from the island, and that an act be passed forbidding any one to sue for a debt within four years.²⁹

Finally, on May 12, 1669, in answer to the numerous complaints of Barbadoes, the Privy Council informed the islanders that the king would not infringe upon the charter granted to the African Company; and that sufficient Negroes would be furnished to the planters at reasonable prices providing the company was assured of payment.³⁰ The company was pleased at the king's favorable decision and at once represented to him its critical financial condition because the planters refused to pay their just debts.³¹ The complaint of the company was considered in the Council September 28, 1669, at which time an order was issued requiring that henceforth land as well as chattel property in Barbadoes might be sold at public auction for the satisfaction of debts. The governor was directed to see that this order not only became a law in Barbadoes, but that after it had been passed it was to be executed.³²

Thus it became clear that the planters of Barbadoes could hope for no relief from the king and, therefore, during the few remaining years in which the company was in existence they made no other consistent effort to convince the king of their point of view. On the other hand, if the company expected the king's instructions to be of great assistance it was sorely disappointed. On August 2, 1671,

²⁷ C. O. 1: 22, f. 204, address of the merchants and planters of Barbadoes now in London, read at the committee of trade, June 16, 1668.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 23, f. 69, address of the representative of Barbadoes to the king, August 3, 1668.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 42, account of affairs in Barbadoes by Lord Willoughby, July 22, 1668.

³⁰ P. C. R., Charles II, 8: 294, May 12, 1669.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8: 402, August 27, 1669.

³² *Ibid.*, 8: 424, September 28, 1669.

John Reid reported that they had been unable to recover the company's debts,³³ and further appeals to the king for relief were of no avail.³⁴

It is difficult to ascertain whether Barbadoes was in as great need of slaves as the planters often asserted. The records kept by the factors in the island have nearly all disappeared. From an early ledger kept by the Barbadoes factors it appears that from August 11, 1663, to March 17, 1664, the usual time for the chief importation of the year, 3,075 Negroes were received by the company's factors. These slaves, 1,051 men, 1,018 women, 136 boys and 56 girls, were sold in return partly for sugar and partly for money. Estimating 2,400 pounds of sugar as equal to seventeen pounds it appears that the average price for these Negroes was a little over sixteen pounds per head.³⁵ This comparatively low price is to be accounted for by the fact that the women and children are averaged with the men, who sold for a higher price. These figures show therefore that the company's factors were selling adult slaves at about seventeen pounds each, as the company had publicly declared that it would do.

In 1667 the company asserted that it had furnished the plantations with about 6,000 slaves each year. This statement is to be doubted since the Anglo-Dutch war had practically disrupted the company's entire trade on the African coast. On the other hand, there is reason to think that the need for slaves in Barbadoes was not so pressing as might be inferred from the statements of the planters.³⁶ They naturally insisted on a large supply of slaves in order to keep the prices as low as possible. There seems no doubt, however, that the islanders were able to obtain more Negroes than they could pay for and were therefore hope-

³³ C. O. 1: 27, f. 24, John Reid to ?Arlington, August 2, 1671.

³⁴ A. C. R., 75: 106, 108, 109, September 11, November 10, 1671.

³⁵ These numbers and prices are gleaned from page three of the Barbadoes ledger. A. C. R., 646.

³⁶ Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers . . . to the Petition . . . exhibited . . . by Sir Paul Painter.

lessly in debt to the company. On July 9, 1668, Governor Willoughby estimated the total population of Barbadoes at 60,000, of which 40,000 were slaves.³⁷ Indeed some merchants declared that the slaves outnumbered the white men twenty to one.³⁸

As compared to its trade with Barbadoes and Jamaica the company's trade in slaves to the Leeward Islands was insignificant. The company located at Nevis a factor who reported to the agents in Barbadoes³⁹ and also at Antigua and Surinam where Governor Byam acted as agent.⁴⁰ In Surinam, the lack of slaves was attributed to the prominent men of Barbadoes who were supposed to be influential with the Royal Company.⁴¹ Later, during the Anglo-Dutch war, one of the company's ships in attempting to go to Surinam with Negroes, was captured by the Dutch.⁴²

After the war the company seems to have neglected the islands altogether. Upon one occasion the planters of Antigua pleaded unsuccessfully to have Negroes furnished to them on credit.⁴³ At another time they asserted that the company treated them much worse than it did the planters of Barbadoes because the latter were able to use their influence with the company to divert the supply of slaves to Barbadoes. Their condition, they declared, seemed all the more bitter when they considered the thriving trade in Negroes which the Dutch carried on from the island of Curaçao.⁴⁴

The history of the slave trade to Jamaica from 1660 to

³⁷ C. O. 29: 1, f. 116, Willoughby to the Lords of the Council, July 9, 1668.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 25, f. 62, memorial of some principal merchants trading to the plantations, 1670.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 18, f. 86, Modyford and Colleton to (the Royal Adventurers); C. O. 1: 20, f. 168, Michael Smith to Richard Chaundler, June 11, 1666.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22, f. 89, Willoughby to Arlington, March 2, 1668.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17, f. 219, Renatus Enys to Bennet, November 1, 1663.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 29: 1, f. 116, Willoughby to the Lords of the Council, July 9, 1668.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1: 22, f. 53, proposals of the inhabitants of Antigua to Governor Willoughby, January 31, 1668.

⁴⁴ C. S. P., Col. 1669-1674, p. 204, William Byam to Willoughby, 1670?; C. O. 1: 25, f. 138, Byam to Willoughby, n. d.

1672 does not present the varied number of problems which arose during the same time in Barbadoes. Jamaica was as yet more sparsely settled than Barbadoes and therefore unable to take as large a number of Negroes. Nevertheless, even before 1660, there was a need for servants in Jamaica,⁴⁵ and there, as in Barbadoes, the Dutch had furnished the planters with Negroes. When a Dutch ship laden with 180 slaves appeared at the island in June, 1661, Colonel d'Oyley, the governor, who was desirous of making a personal profit out of the sales, was strongly in favor of permitting the vessel to land its Negroes. The Jamaica council, however, realized that the Navigation Act made the Negro trade with the Dutch illegal, and therefore it refused to accede to the governor's desire. This action so enraged the governor that on his own responsibility he purchased the whole cargo of slaves, some of which he sold to a Quaker in the island, while the others he disposed of at considerable profit to a Spaniard.⁴⁶ Again, in February, 1662, d'Oyley bought a number of Negroes from another Dutchman. When one of the king's ships attempted to seize the Dutch vessel for infringing the Navigation Act, the governor even contrived to get it safely away from the island.⁴⁷

When Colonel Modyford became governor of Jamaica in 1664, he was instructed to do all that he possibly could to encourage the trade which the Royal Company was endeavoring to set on foot in the West Indies.⁴⁸ In the instructions mention was also made of Modyford's previous interest in managing the affairs of the Royal Company in Barbadoes for which company, it was said, he undoubtedly retained great affection. Shortly thereafter he issued a

⁴⁵ C. S. P., Col., 1675-1676, Addenda, p. 125, Cornelius Burough to the Admiralty Commissioners, November 28, 1658.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1661-1668, p. 36, narrative of the buying of a shipload of Negroes, June 14, 1661.

⁴⁷ C. O. 1: 16, f. 77, Captain Richard Whiting to the officers of his Majesty's navy, March 10, 1662; C. O. 1: 17, f. 236, petition of Colonel Godfrey Ashbey and others to the king, 1663.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 18, f. 58, instructions to Colonel Modyford, governor of Jamaica, February 18, 1664.

proclamation promising extensive freedom of commerce except in the Negro trade which was in the hands of the Royal Company.⁴⁹

Although Modyford's proclamation indicated a continued interest in the company's trade, he gave his first consideration to the welfare of the colony. This appears from a list of the island's needs which he submitted to the king, May 10, 1664, in which he asked among other things that the Royal Company be obliged to furnish annually whatever Negroes were necessary, and that the poorer planters be accorded easy terms in paying for them. Furthermore he requested that indentured servants be sent from England and that the island might have freedom of trade except in Negroes.⁵⁰ His desires for a free trade were denied, but the Privy Council agreed to consult with the Royal Company and to recommend that it be obliged to furnish Jamaica with a sufficient supply of Negroes.⁵¹

There is no evidence that the Privy Council called the company's attention to Modyford's request, nor is there any indication that it endeavored to send very many Negroes to Jamaica. Modyford attended to a plantation which the company had bought in Jamaica⁵² and he sold a few slaves to the Spaniards,⁵³ but all the company's affairs in the aggregate really amounted to little in that island. There was a continual call for a greater supply of Negroes than the company sent.⁵⁴ Two ledgers used by the factors show that 690 Negroes were sold in 1666 and in the following year,⁵⁵ 170. Although this number was inadequate to meet the colony's needs, it is doubtful whether the company sent any slaves to Jamaica after 1667.

⁴⁹ C. O. 1: 18, f. 81, declaration of Sir Thomas Modyford, March 2, 1664.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 135, Modyford to Bennet, May 10, 1664.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, f. 208, report of the Privy Council on Jamaica affairs, August 10, 1664.

⁵² A. C. R., 75: 89.

⁵³ Add. MSS., 12,430, f. 31, Beeston, Journal, February 7, 1664/5.

⁵⁴ C. O. 1: 19, f. 31, Lynch to Bennet, February 12, 1665; *ibid.*, f. 189, John Style to (Bennet), July 24, 1665.

⁵⁵ A. C. R., 869, entries from January 1, 1665/6 to December 31, 1666; *ibid.*, 870: 62.

Under these circumstances Modyford lost interest in the company's affairs and therefore it resolved, April 6, 1669, to dispense with his services. Modyford had received a pension of three hundred pounds per year up to Michaelmas, 1666, but after that time the company's financial condition no longer warranted this expense. The company does not seem to have been displeased with Modyford because it requested that he use his good offices as governor to assist it in every possible way. At the same time the services of the other factor, Mr. Molesworth, were discontinued and he was requested to send an inventory of the company's affairs.⁵⁶

Modyford thus free from his connection with the company probably represented the desires of the Jamaica people in a more unbiased manner. On September 20, 1670, he enumerated a number of needs of the island and asked Secretary Arlington that licenses to trade to Africa for Negroes be granted free of charge or at least at more moderate rates. For this privilege he declared that security could be given that the slaves would be carried only to Jamaica. The Royal Company itself could not complain when it realized how much this freedom of trade would mean toward the prosperity of Jamaica, and thus ultimately to the entire kingdom.⁵⁷ Modyford admitted that the Anglo-Dutch war had been a great hindrance to Jamaica's prosperity but that the lack of Negroes since 1665 had been a much greater obstruction.⁵⁸

The more insistent demands which Governor Modyford made in 1670 for freedom of trade to Africa show that the company's failure to send Negroes to Jamaica after 1667 was beginning to be resented. Although there had been a constant demand for Negroes in Jamaica there was up to 1670 less need for slaves there than in Barbadoes. At least

⁵⁶ A. C. R., 75: 14, 89.

⁵⁷ C. O. 1: 25, f. 127, Modyford to Arlington, (September 20, 1670).

⁵⁸ C. S. P., Col., 1669-1674, p. 107, additional propositions made to the Privy Council about Jamaica by Charles Modyford by order of Sir Thomas Modyford, (September 28, 1670).

the demands made by the planters of Jamaica were not so frequent and so insistent as they were in Barbadoes. To a certain extent the planters of Jamaica may have been deterred from representing the lack of labor supply while Governor Modyford was one of the company's factors. Modyford had been very much interested in the company's trade, especially with the Spanish colonies. As soon as it became clear, however, that the losses incurred in the Anglo-Dutch war, would make it impossible for the company to continue the slave trade to the West Indies, Modyford undoubtedly voiced a genuine demand on the part of the planters for more slaves. By the year 1670 the island was better developed than it had been ten years before and the need for slaves was beginning to be acute.⁵⁹

About the first of March, 1662, two Spaniards made their appearance at Barbadoes to make overtures for a supply of slaves, which they intended to transport to Peru. If they received encouragement, the Spaniards asserted that they would come every fortnight with large supplies of bullion to pay for the slaves which they exported. Sir Thomas Modyford, the company's factor and the speaker of the Barbadoes assembly, was enthusiastic about this proposition and pointed out that the trade with the Spanish colonies would increase the king's revenue and at the same time would deprive the Dutch of a lucrative trade.⁶⁰ Since they were well treated on their first visit to Barbadoes the Spaniards returned in April, 1662, at which time they bought four hundred Negroes for which they paid from 125 to 140 pieces of eight.⁶¹ When the Spaniards came to export their Negroes, however, they found that Governor Willoughby had levied a duty of eleven pieces of eight on each Negro. The assembly under Modyford's leadership at once declared the imposition of such a tax illegal. This resolution was carried to the council where, against the opposition of the governor, it was also passed. Governor

⁵⁹ C. O. 1: 14, f. 56, proposal by Lord Marlborough, 1663.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, f. 28, Thomas Modyford? to his brother, March 30, 1662.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, f. 29, Thomas Modyford? to his brother, April 30, 1662.

Willoughby, nevertheless, had the temerity to collect the tax on some of the Negroes then in port, and a little later when one of the ships of the Royal Adventurers sold its Negroes to the Spaniards, he again enforced the payment of the export tax.⁶² Notwithstanding the governor's actions, Modyford despatched one of his own ships with slaves to Cartagena where it arrived safely and was well treated by the Spaniards.⁶³ Modyford was now more than ever convinced of the possibilities of the trade with the Spanish colonies, but believing that it could not be conducted successfully by private individuals, he recommended that it be settled on the Royal Company.⁶⁴

When the Royal Company learned that the trade in Negroes to the Spanish colonies offered many possibilities it was very much interested. A petition was immediately submitted to the king requesting that, if the Spaniards were allowed to come to Barbadoes for slaves, the whole trade be conferred on the Royal Company. The company declared that the planters in the colonies had no reason to object to this arrangement because they had not engaged in this trade, and moreover an opportunity was being offered to them to become members of the company.⁶⁵

The Privy Council was favorable to the company's proposition, and on March 13, 1663, the king instructed Lord Willoughby to permit the Spaniards to trade at Barbadoes for slaves notwithstanding any letters of marque that had been issued against them, or any provisions of the Navigation Act. He declared that the Spaniards were to be allowed to import into Barbadoes only the products of their own colonies, and were not to be permitted to carry away the produce of the English colonies. The effect of this provision was that in addition to slaves the Spaniards

⁶² C. O. 1: 17, ff. 29, 30, Thomas Modyford† to his brother, May 26, 1662.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, f. 32, Thomas Modyford† to his brother, September 3, 13, 1662.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 32, Thomas Modyford† to his brother, September 13, 1662.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 20, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king, †January, 1663.

might obtain any products imported into Barbadoes from England.⁶⁶ The king settled the question of duties on slaves by ordering that ten pieces of eight on each Negro should be paid by all persons who exported slaves from Barbadoes or Jamaica to the Spanish colonies, except the agents of the Royal Company. The company was to pay no export duties on Negroes especially when the Spaniards had made previous contracts for them in England.⁶⁷

Probably on account of the export duty on slaves which Willoughby had levied in 1662, the Spaniards were not anxious to return to Barbadoes. The company's factors therefore sent one of their ships with slaves to Terra Firma in order to convince the Spaniards that their desire for a Negro trade was genuine. On this occasion Lord Willoughby and the council of the island exacted £320 in customs from the factors. When the company heard of this procedure it immediately asked the king to enforce the order allowing it to export Negroes free of duty.⁶⁸ Thereupon the king ordered Willoughby to make immediate restitution of the £320 and to give the company's factors as much encouragement as possible.⁶⁹ Willoughby finally obeyed in a sullen manner. On May 20, 1665 he declared that the company had finally monopolized the Spanish trade for Negroes and that, because the king refused to permit an export duty to be levied on them, there was no revenue from that source.⁷⁰ The king's concessions to the Royal Company were of little avail, however, because the Anglo-Dutch war

⁶⁶ C. O. 1: 17, f. 136, instructions to Lord Willoughby, June 16, 1663.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 227 (the king to the governors of Barbadoes and Jamaica), March 30, 1663. That there was some trouble in deciding just what provisions to make regarding the Spanish trade appears from several unsigned and undated letters to Willoughby with conflicting provisions, but they nearly all mention the exception made in favor of the Royal Company in the letter of March 13, 1663. C. O. 1: 17, f. 22; C. O. 1: 17, ff. 24, 25; C. O. 1: 17, ff. 26, 27; P. C. R., Charles II, 3: 336-338.

⁶⁸ C. O. 1: 17, ff. 225, 226, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king, November, 1663.

⁶⁹ Willoughby made a restitution of the £320 in March, 1664. C. O. 1: 18, f. 86, Modyford and Colleton to (the Royal Adventurers), March 31, 1664.

⁷⁰ C. O. 1: 19, f. 124, Willoughby to the king, May 20, 1665.

effectually stopped most of the company's trade in Negroes including that from Barbadoes to the Spanish colonies.

In considering the trade in slaves from Jamaica to the Spanish colonies it is well to keep in mind that this island lay far to the west of all other English possessions in the West Indies. It was located in the very midst of the Spanish possessions from which it had been wrested in 1655 by the expedition of Sir William Penn and Admiral Venables. The people of the island realized their isolation and occasionally attempted to break down the decrees of the Spanish government, which forbade its colonies to have any intercourse with foreigners. Although the English government began a somewhat similar policy with respect to its colonies in the Navigation Act of 1660, it was generally agreed that some exception should be made for the island of Jamaica in connection with the Spanish trade.

When Lord Windsor became governor of Jamaica in 1662 he was instructed to endeavor to secure a free commerce with the Spanish colonies. If the governors of the Spanish colonies refused to grant this trade voluntarily, Lord Windsor and the council of the island were given permission to compel the Spanish authorities to acquiesce by the use of force or any other means at their disposal.⁷¹ Accordingly a letter embodying this request was written to the governors of Porto Rico and Santo Domingo, but unfavorable replies were received. In accordance with the king's instructions the Jamaica council determined to obtain a trade by force.⁷² This was done by issuing letters of marque to privateers for the purpose of preying upon Spanish ships.⁷³

In the following year, 1663, as has already been mentioned, Charles II commanded the governors of Barbadoes

⁷¹ C. O. 1: 16, f. 112, additional instructions to Lord Windsor, governor of Jamaica, April 8, 1662.

⁷² C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 106, minutes of the council of Jamaica, August 20, 1662.

⁷³ A full description of privateering by the English against the Spaniards from the year 1680 to 1670 may be found in an article by Miss Violet Barbour in the *American Historical Review*, XVI: 529-566.

and Jamaica to permit the Spaniards to buy goods and Negroes in their respective islands, and to refrain from charging duties on these Negroes in case they were reexported by the agents of the Royal Adventurers.⁷⁴ This was followed by a royal order of April 29, 1663, commanding the governor to stop all hostile measures against the Spaniards. Sir Charles Lyttleton, the deputy governor, replied that he hoped the attempt to begin a trade with the Spaniards would be successful, especially in Negroes, which the Spaniards could not obtain more easily than in Jamaica.⁷⁵

When Sir Charles Modyford became governor of Jamaica in 1664, the king repeated his desire to promote trade and correspondence with the Spanish plantations. Indeed Modyford's previous success in selling Negroes to the Spaniards probably influenced his appointment to this office. As soon as Modyford reached Jamaica he wrote a letter to the governor of Santo Domingo informing him that the king had ordered a cessation of hostilities and desired a peaceful commerce with the Spanish colonies.⁷⁶ Modyford instructed the two commissioners by whom the letter was sent to emphasize the trade in Negroes and to induce the Spaniards, if possible, to negotiate with him in regard to this matter.⁷⁷ Again the answer of the governor of Santo Domingo was unfavorable. He pointed out that it was not within his power to order a commerce with Jamaica, but that this was the province of the government in Spain. The governor, moreover, complained that the people of Jamaica had acted in the same hostile manner toward the Spaniards since the Restoration as they had in Cromwell's time, and therefore his people were little inclined to begin a trade with Jamaica.

⁷⁴ C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 125 (the king to the governors of Barbadoes and Jamaica), March 13, 1663.

⁷⁵ C. O. 1: 17, f. 199, Sir Charles Lyttleton, deputy governor, to Bennet, October 15, 1663.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 18, f. 137, Modyford to the governor of Santo Domingo, April 30, 1664.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 139, Modyford's instructions to Colonel Cary and Captain Perrott, May 2, 1664.

The refusal of the Spanish governor to consider Modyford's proposition seemed all the more bitter since it was well known at that time that the Spaniards were obtaining many Negroes from the Dutch West India Company. The Genoese also had a contract with the Spaniards to deliver 24,500 Negroes in seven years nearly all of whom they expected to obtain from the Dutch at that "cursed little barren island" of Curaçao, as Sir Thomas Lynch called it. Lynch also observed that if the Royal Company desired to participate in the Spanish trade it would either have to sell to the Genoese or drive the Dutch out of Africa, because he did not believe it was possible to call in the privateers without the assistance of several men-of-war.⁷⁸ Just how much weight should be attached to this opinion is doubtful since Lynch was probably so much interested in continuing privateering against the Spaniards, that he cared little how much this would interfere with the company's attempt to develop the Negro trade.

Lynch's opinion was not shared by the king, who had heard that the privateers were continuing their hostilities against the Spaniards. He therefore informed Modyford that he could not adequately express his dissatisfaction at the daily complaints made by the Spaniards about the violence of ships said to belong to Jamaica. Modyford was strictly commanded to secure and punish any such offenders.⁷⁹ The governor issued a proclamation in accordance with the king's instructions,⁸⁰ and also notified the governor of Havana that offenders against Spanish commerce would hereafter be punished as pirates.⁸¹

After the Anglo-Dutch war began the company imported very few Negroes to Jamaica for the Spanish trade or for any other purpose. The king's stringent orders re-

⁷⁸ C. O. 1: 18, ff. 152, 153, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Lynch to Bennet, May 25, 1664.

⁷⁹ C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 215, the king to Modyford, June 15, 1664.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220, proclamation by Sir Thomas Modyford, governor of Jamaica, June 15, 1664.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 228, minutes of the council of Jamaica, August 19-22, 1664.

garding privateers were gradually allowed to go unnoticed. Modyford again began to issue letters of marque, a procedure which naturally destroyed all possibility of commerce between the Spanish colonies and the Royal Company.

At the time the desultory trade in Negroes was being started with the Spaniards at Barbadoes, Richard White, of Spain, came to England as an agent for two Spaniards, Domingo Grillo and Ambrosio Lomoline.⁸² These two men had been granted the *assiento* in Spain, that is, the privilege of furnishing the Spanish colonies with Negro slaves. In order to wrest some of this trade from the Dutch West India Company the Royal Company entered into a contract with White, in the year 1663, to furnish the Spanish *assientists* with 3,500 Negroes per year for a definite number of years. According to this contract the slaves were to be delivered to the vessels of the *assientists* in Barbadoes and Jamaica; one of the company's factors was to be placed on board such ships; and the necessary safe conducts were to be procured for their voyage to and from the port of Cadiz.⁸³ Sir Ellis Leighton, secretary of the Royal Adventurers, obtained permission for Grillo's agents to reside in Jamaica and Barbadoes.⁸⁴ Sir Martin Noell, one of the most important West Indian merchants, as well as a prominent member of the African Company, seems to have been intrusted with the collection of the money due on this contract.⁸⁵

Not long after this agreement was made the possibility

⁸² C. S. P., Dom., 1663-1664, p. 168, Richard White to Captain Weld, June 11, 1663.

⁸³ As this contract cannot be discovered it is difficult to say just when it was made or what were its conditions. Georges Scelle in his book, *La Traité Nègrière aux Indes de Castille*, I: 524, gives the date of this contract as February 28, 1663, and says it was for 35,000 Negroes which were to be delivered at the rate of 5,000 per year. This may be true, but on the other hand the company distinctly declares in one place that the contract was for the annual delivery of 3,500 Negroes per year. C. O. 1: 19, ff. 7, 8, brief narrative of the trade and present condition of the Royal Adventurers, 1664/5.

⁸⁴ C. O. 1: 17, f. 189, memorial of Sir Ellis Leighton to the duke of York, 11663.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 244, 247; A. C. R., 75: 48.

of a war with the Dutch began to appear. The company considered ways by which Grillo might be induced to mitigate the contract.⁸⁶ Complications concerning the security to be given arose, and Grillo complained that the required number of Negroes was not being furnished to him. Under the circumstances this was almost impossible because the outbreak of the Anglo-Dutch war made it very difficult to obtain slaves. Nevertheless, on May 26, 1665, the company resolved to procure as many Negroes as possible to fill the contract, providing Grillo made prompt payments.⁸⁷

As may be surmised no great number of slaves was exported from Barbadoes or Jamaica on this contract. Only one ship arrived at Barbadoes from Cadiz desiring to secure one thousand slaves, but the company's factors could obtain only eight hundred. Lord Willoughby carefully reported that he had complied with his Majesty's command not to exact any export duty for these slaves.⁸⁸ In Jamaica fewer Negroes are known to have been sold on this contract to Spanish ships which came from Cartagena.⁸⁹ There may have been other instances of sales not recorded, but it is certain that the war interfered to such an extent that the number of Negroes sold to Grillo fell far short of what the contract called for. In order to keep the agreement intact the company resolved, March 23, 1666, to lay the situation before the king, and to ask him to permit Grillo's agents to buy sufficient Negroes in the plantations to make up the required number, and that no export duties be charged on them.⁹⁰ The king complied with the company's request, and the desired orders were sent to the governors of Jamaica and Barbadoes.⁹¹ Some trouble had arisen in Jamaica, however, between Grillo's agents and Governor Modyford. Since the company believed that Grillo's

⁸⁶ A. C. R., 75: 15, August 5, 1664.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 75: 34, May 26, 1665.

⁸⁸ C. O. 1: 18, f. 165, Willoughby to the king, June 17, 1664.

⁸⁹ Add. MSS., 12,430, f. 31, Beeston, Journal, April 8, 1665.

⁹⁰ A. C. R., 75: 43, March 23, 1665/6.

⁹¹ P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 396, March 30, 1666.

agents were primarily to blame for this, it resolved in the future to deliver Negroes only at Barbadoes in return for ready money.⁹²

This was virtually the end of the contract. In 1667 the company spoke of the agreement as having been broken by the Grillos, and that it was under no further obligation to carry out its terms. Altogether, it declared, that no more than 1,200 Negroes had been delivered to Grillo's agents.⁹³ Thus this project which the company at first asserted would bring into the English kingdom 86,000 pounds of Spanish silver per year,⁹⁴ ended in this insignificant fashion.

Although the Grillo contract and the other attempts to begin a slave trade with the Spanish colonies had proved much less successful than the Company of Royal Adventurers had hoped, a great deal had been accomplished toward bringing to light the fundamental difficulties of this trade. In the first place not much could be accomplished in the way of developing this trade so long as the Spanish government maintained its attitude of uncompromising hostility toward all foreigners notwithstanding the fact that the Spanish colonists would gladly have welcomed the slave traders. Furthermore, although the English government had signified its willingness to disregard the restrictions of the Navigation Acts in this instance, the hostile attitude assumed by the planters toward the trade in slaves to the Spanish colonies also had to be taken into consideration. Whenever the planters were able to do so they endeavored to prevent the exportation to the Spanish colonies of slaves which they maintained were very much needed on their own plantations.

This opposition to the trade in Negroes to the Spanish colonies was only one of the several ways in which the col-

⁹² A. C. R., 75: 46; Add. MSS., 12,430, f. 31, Beeston, Journal, February 7, 1664/5.

⁹³ Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers . . . to the Petition . . . exhibited . . . by Sir Paul Painter.

⁹⁴ C. O. 1: 19, ff. 7, 8, brief narrative of the trade and present condition of the Royal Adventurers, 1664/5.

onists manifested their hostility toward the mercantile element in general and the Company of Royal Adventurers in particular. Freedom of trade with all the world seemed very desirable to the planters who regarded the restrictions of the Navigation Acts as gross favoritism and partiality to the rising mercantile class. The monopoly of supplying the colonies with slaves, conferred upon the Company of Royal Adventurers, was most cordially hated on account of the great degree of dependence placed upon slave labor in the plantations. As a result of this conflict of interests the planters early resorted to numerous devices such as the laws for the protection of debtors, to embarrass the company in the exercise of its monopoly. Since the company had received its exclusive privileges by a charter from the crown the English planters in the West Indies soon found that their trouble with the Company of Royal Adventurers brought them also into direct conflict with the king. In this way the planters enjoyed the distinction of being among the first to begin the opposition which later, in the Great Revolution, resulted in the overthrow of James II and the royal prerogative.

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